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JOHN M. MEAD.

He said "I wish to join that company of Children around God's throne" P. 72.

BOSTON.
Peirce & Parker No. 9 Cornhill.

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MEMOIR

OF

JOHN MOONEY MEAD,

WHO DIED AT

EAST HARTFORD, APRIL 8, 1831,

AGED

4 YEARS, 11 MONTHS, AND 4 DAYS.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."—LUKE XVIII. 16.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

As it is *possible* some few things are stated in the following Memoir somewhat different from the recollection of others, or from statements contained in letters, written since John's death, in possession of the correspondents of his parents, it is specially requested, that any needed corrections may be communicated to the publishers, in Boston, or Mrs. Jane G. Mead, in East Hartford, Ct. Should any person, formerly acquainted with this boy, recollect any thing particularly interesting, not stated in the Memoir, he is solicited to communicate it as above, that it may be hereafter inserted.

PREFACE.

The following Memoir was written, at the request of a number of persons, much engaged in the religious education of the young. Some of these persons were intimately acquainted with the subject of it, and others had heard much of him, and had received a favorable impression in regard to his character. It has been examined by several judicious persons—ministers of the gospel, and others, all of whom united in the request, that it might be published.

As those, who first proposed this publication, all agreed in the opinion, that a knowledge of the manner in which this child was treated, together with the results, would be profitable to both parents and children, and a benefit to the cause of education, to communicate this knowledge, has been an object constantly in view. He is not therefore shown *merely* as a pious child. The character of his intellect, as well

as of his heart, is kept before the reader, and not only the kind of knowledge communicated, but the manner also of communicating it, is shown. No doubt, the sanctification of the child should be the first and principal object of the parent's solicitude ; but this is to be attained by the truth, and a knowledge of the truth is essential to its effect. The intellect of the child therefore must be cultivated, in order to reach the heart. Should God grant his blessing in his usual manner, it will be found, that the benefit will be proportioned to the clearness of the child's understanding of religious truth, and the happy associations connected with it. The manner then of communicating truth, and the objects associated with it, are important matters for the consideration of parents and teachers.

Influenced by these considerations, the writer has made a book for parents and teachers, as well as for children and pupils. How profitable to either it will be, future events must determine. Had the parents of this child expected to be called so early to part with their son, they would have kept in writing an account of what might be profitably made known. No doubt a larger and more valuable book might have been

the result. Then the thousand little things that have influence in forming character, would have been seen, and the innumerable actions, unimportant in themselves, but which must be known to form a right estimate of a character, would have been presented. But being obliged to depend on memory, and not wishing to add another to the already too numerous fictitious narratives before the public, they have given only what is distinctly recollected, and commit the work, imperfect as it is, to the blessing of God, hoping it may not be altogether useless.

It is possible, that some things are not stated *precisely* as they occurred, but no intentional exaggeration is admitted; and it is believed, that the impression given in regard to the character of this child is not more favorable than truth warrants.

Should the prevalent impression, that it is impossible for a young child to give evidence of piety, be removed from the mind of any, and parents and teachers encouraged to labor more for the early conversion of those committed to them, expecting success, then those who mourn the early exit of this lovely boy, will rejoice, that he has not lived, or died, in vain.

In regard to the style in which this Memoir is presented, there will, no doubt, be differences of opinion. If, however, every reader shall understand what is written, and be profited, the writer's object is attained.

NOTE.

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While the following Memoir was in the press, the writer of it, and the father of the little child, was called to his final account. He died of typhus fever, October 26, 1831, in less than seven months after the decease of his son. A fact so solemn and impressive ought not to be here omitted; nor the Memoir of the child be suffered to go out to the public, without such a brief notice of the father as opportunity will permit us to furnish.

The Rev. Asa Mead spent his early days in Meredith, N. H., where it is supposed he was born. He was graduated at Dartmouth College in 1818, and received his theological education at the Seminary in Andover. He was several years pastor of the Congregational Church in Brunswick, Me. Afterward, he travelled extensively in Maine, New York, and other states,

to plead the cause of Temperance. August 18, 1830, he was installed pastor of the church in East Hartford, Conn., where he buried his son, and where his own body lies waiting for the morning of the resurrection. Mr. Mead was a nervous writer, an animating preacher, an ardent and devoted servant of Christ, an active friend of every benevolent enterprise, "a man of God, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." He was extensively known and highly esteemed in the churches of our Lord; and many hearts have bled on the annunciation of his early and sudden departure. But he has not lived in vain. He has left many seals of his ministry as a preacher of the gospel; and his efforts, particularly for the promotion of Temperance and of Peace, will be remembered long after he has ceased from his labors. Nor will the world have occasion to regret that he was the father of such a son; that he lived to train him up so faithfully for Christ and heaven; or that he was spared to give us so lucid an exposition of the principles on which his education was conducted, and of their happy results. How could the father have buried his child in such joyful hope, or have gone peacefully to his own rest leaving his children behind him in this wicked world, if he had not been *faithful to his infant charge day by*

day? Would not every parent thus send his children before him to the Saviour's arms, or leave them safe in his fold at his own decease? Then let him read this Memoir, and learn how to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And surely the providences here narrated admonish him, to "do with his might whatsoever his hand findeth to do." It is one of the brightest aspects of the present age, that the hearts of the fathers are turned to the children, and early conversions are multiplied; and no one can better serve his generation, or more effectually prepare the way of the Lord, than by teaching parents how they may secure for their offspring the blessings of the covenant, and make them "a godly seed" in their infant days.

A. R.

MEMOIR.

JOHN MOONEY MEAD, the subject of this memoir, was born at Brunswick, in the state of Maine, May 4th, 1826. His father was then pastor of the Congregational church in that town. From his birth, and even before, he was the subject of many earnest prayers. The chief desire of his parents was, that he might be early converted to Christ, and wholly employed in the love and service of God.

He was their first-born, and when they presented him in the house of God for dedication in baptism, it was with strong desires, that he might be wholly the Lord's, and with firm confidence in the covenant of grace, as belonging to the children of believers thus dedicated in faith, as well as to the parents.

It was their particular desire, that, should it please God, he might in due time become a preacher of the gospel; but their prayers were generally petitions for his early conversion to Christ, and his sanctification.

In the name selected for him, they wished to prepare to exert a happy influence, by keeping before him a good example. They therefore se-

lected that of a man who had been an early and most valued friend of his father, well known in New Hampshire, as a friend to the fatherless and widow; who then was on the borders of eternity, trusting he was about to enter the rest that remaineth for God's people.

They felt strongly the necessity of being prepared to discharge the duties of parents, in training up an immortal being; and sought preparation by reading some of the best books on early education, by frequent conversations with each other, and by prayer for wisdom from above, often pleading the promise: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

A very considerable part of the value of the memoir of such a child, must consist in the addition it shall make to the stock of information on early education. The reader, whether a parent, a child, or a teacher, will therefore have patience to read a somewhat particular and minute account of the measures adopted with this child, and their results. It is hoped it may not be time spent in vain.

The first understanding of his parents with each other was, that every thing in regard to the management of their child should be matter of consultation and prayer, that they would always act in concert, so as not to thwart each other, and that they would pursue a uniform system, always keeping his good in view.

They regarded him from the first as an *immortal* being, who would forever feel the consequences of what they should do in relation to him. In

their conversations it was early and often remarked, that he was acquiring knowledge, and forming habits, for eternity. Nothing, therefore, that affected him, could be indifferent. Even what seemed to many trifles, might be of immense importance to him.

On this account they commenced, when he was only a few months old, withholding from him whatever he cried for, and when he was fretful, they did not pacify him by caresses, or by bestowing what he desired, but by directing his attention to something else. It was a common saying with them, that parents often hire their children to cry and be fretful. They give whatever the child demands in this way, and thus obtain present relief from his importunity, but teach him how to obtain hereafter, whatever he may desire; thus subjecting themselves to all his caprices, whenever he chooses to make himself and them unhappy by his fretfulness. Perhaps in no way are more children injured than in this. It teaches them to be selfish, and regardless of the feelings of others. It habituates them to obtain what they desire, in the most disagreeable way; and for these habits they must be often chastised, and meet with many mortifications while young, to subdue their disposition, or they are rendered disagreeable and miserable for life. A little resolution, early practised and persevered in, might have prevented these evils, and even saved the parents much trouble, as well as the child much sorrow. At least, so believed the parents of this child, and they have seen no cause to doubt its truth.

The next result of regarding him as an immortal being was, that his parents began at a very early period to give him all the knowledge they could, especially religious knowledge, believing it *would abide with him* eternally. They often remarked, that they could not make their son rich, but they could give him that which would be a blessing to him, when all riches would vanish. They entrusted him very little with others, and as soon as he could understand, he was often placed in his little chair by the side of his mother, or on his father's knee, to hear stories repeated in the simplest language, or little hymns rehearsed, and then explained, when he seemed not to understand them.

Before he could talk plainly, he knew several of these hymns for children, and seemed to understand them. This was the case also with several texts of scripture often repeated to him; and he knew, that Jesus loves to have little children pray to him, because, when on earth, he took them up in his arms, and put his hands on them, and blessed them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The thought, 'he is immortal,' led his parents to consider it of great importance to cherish his benevolent affections. This they did by endeavoring always to exhibit these affections themselves in his presence, avoiding, as much as possible, even an unpleasant look or tone of voice, treating him, and teaching him to treat others, with a constant kindness, and guarding against all unnecessary occasions of irritation. They found

him soon imitating their very looks and tones of voice, and were convinced, that even these have more influence in forming the early character of children, than all the good precepts and counsels that can be given them, when not acted on by the parents themselves. Every child has an eye quick to discern, and imitates actions, long before he understands rules, and forms habits of conduct, before he can perceive the advantage of obeying laws.

Another thing agreed upon by his parents was, that they would treat their son as a rational being. They believed, that a child can be reasoned with, and made to understand why he should do what he is required, or refrain from what he is forbidden to do, and this as soon as he understands the meaning of the words used. How early he will understand language, depends on words being always used in a proper manner in his hearing. They never therefore talked to him in the affected babyish manner common with some parents and others, who, when talking to a child, use language without meaning, or mispronounce words; as if the child could better understand mere nonsense, than correct expressions. All the words used when speaking to him, had as uniform a meaning, as when speaking to adults. The most perceptible effect of this was, that from the first, his pronunciation was uncommonly distinct, and his language very correct, a circumstance observed with surprise by many, till they learned the reason.

Very early his parents began to tell him why they required him to do what he was bidden, and

he rarely hesitated a moment, whenever he understood the reason. Care was necessary to prevent his always demanding a reason, however prompt the necessary obedience. But this was easily prevented, by using, at such times, a tone of more decision and authority; a practice, the meaning of which, even a child will soon understand.

He was early taught to subject his own will to that of his parents. This they endeavored to procure, as far as possible, by gentle means, but if these failed, they applied the rod of chastisement. His father well recollects the first and only severe contest to subdue his will. It was when he was about fourteen months old. There is no need to give particulars. Suffice it to say, he understood what was required of him, and refused to obey. Chastisement was inflicted with a *very* light rod, and at short intervals, till he obeyed. Then he immediately asked to be taken up, put his arms round his father's neck, put his little face up to his in the most affectionate manner, and seemed after this to love his father more than ever. The sight or mention of a rod was all, for months, that was necessary to produce instantaneous obedience. It was found, however, that obedience was generally readiest, and most cheerful, when the commands were given in the mildest and most affectionate manner, seeming rather to ask, than to demand compliance. By pursuing this course, his parents endeavored to connect obedience with pleasure, and resorted to severer methods only when milder means had failed. If in any instance they de-

parted from this method, they soon saw reason to regret it, for he would adopt their tone and manner in making his own requests, and never seem to think it improper. This will probably be observed in nearly every child, and shows the importance of care in every thing regarding them.

From the first, it was understood, that John's parents did not allow any one to deceive him on any account. No false pretences were allowed, no promises made to him without the intention of fulfilling them, and no threats which it was not intended to execute, if necessary. He always therefore expected just what had been promised, and on the very conditions, and at the time specified. If from forgetfulness this was not done, he would remind the person of it, and perhaps say he had told a falsehood. If his parents had failed, they did not hesitate to confess the fault, and tell him they were sorry, must ask God to forgive them, and do so no more. Sometimes he thought they failed, because he did not understand them; and then they explained their meaning, and showed him they had not failed. Thus they endeavored, by example, to inculcate a sacred regard to truth; and in vain will parents hope to do it in any other way. The child will do as he knows they do, and how can they correct him for it?

No one was allowed to frighten John with threats, or tales of spirits, or imaginary dangers, nor to give him a dread of being alone or in the dark; and till he learned it from other children, he never appeared to dread darkness more than light, nor to know fear, where there was not real

danger. He was accustomed, from less than a year old, to be put to bed at sunset, and never caused trouble during the night, on any account. When his usual time came he expected to retire, and made no resistance or complaint.

Before he was two years old, it was manifest he had a most ardent thirst for knowledge—a strong desire to be acquainted with every thing around him. This his parents determined to gratify, and therefore explained whatever he wished to understand, and answered his numerous questions, as far as they could, and never discouraged his asking as many as he pleased. He was not put off with a frown, or reproved for his curiosity; but they answered him pleasantly, when they could, and when they could not, they told him so.

In the exercise of this curiosity, he learned, with very little encouragement, nearly all the letters of the alphabet, before he was two years old, by picking them out on a stove in the sitting room, and asking their names. Those not on the stove he learned with very little pains, so as to name them all readily, before he was two years old. This same curiosity was still indulged, and grew in strength daily. He would employ his father or mother an hour at a time answering his questions, and never seem wearied, while they could attend to him. These questions were rarely trifling, and generally manifested much thought, and some understanding of the subject. If an answer was not understood by him, that must be explained, till he understood the whole, or thought he did, and then he appeared satis-

fied, and seldom asked the same question again. This trait of character is, no doubt, common in a greater or less degree, to all children; and needs but to be encouraged to secure a rapid advance in knowledge and eminent attainments, at least by many.

The parents of this child never adopted the practice of hiring him to do what they wished, by giving toys or luxuries. When he had been obedient, or had performed *very well* what he was directed, or had done a praiseworthy act without bidding, they often gave him a ride, or a present of something useful; or, what he loved quite as well, told or read him a story from the Bible, or some other book, and informed him, it was told him because he had done well. At other times his reward was, being permitted to carry relief to those in want, or to help his father do something useful, in which he greatly delighted.

As before remarked, his parents always considered his religious instruction of the first importance, and made it the prominent object never to be neglected. It was the custom, from about a year old, for one of them to pray with him when he went to bed at night, as well as at other times; and he was taught, as soon as he could speak, to repeat the Lord's prayer, and a short simple petition for a holy heart, and for blessings on his parents, and other relations. They endeavored to convince him, that this was of no use, unless he prayed in his heart; and they explained and illustrated what it is to pray in the heart, so that he could understand it.

Their instructions respecting prayer were often repeated, and much pains were taken to show its importance, and to make it a pleasant employment thus to speak with God.

He was always taught to consider the Bible the best of all books, a holy book, God's own book; and the most interesting parts of its history were frequently repeated to him in simple language, and he was told these were in the Bible, and he must learn to read them himself. Of these he was never tired, but would sit and listen to his mother, as long as she was able to go on; and when she was fatigued, he would ask for another story.

Before he was two years old, his father purchased him a hieroglyphic Bible, to which he at once became attached, and by often questioning respecting the meaning of its various emblems and pictures, he became familiar with most of the passages of scripture found in it, even before he could read. His attachment to this book never appeared to diminish, till he began to read in the Bible itself, and then he almost at once laid it aside. No doubt it greatly assisted his understanding of the Bible. He would often say, when he read one of these passages, "This is in my hieroglyphic Bible."

From two years old to three, his progress in learning to read was slow. His mother could give but little attention, at that time, to his instruction;* and his parents did not deem it ex-

* It should be recollected that he was at this time *very young*. It is hoped that no parent will consider this a warrant for allowing older children to be idle, merely because they seem unwilling to learn.

pedient to urge him forward faster than he chose, lest his health might be injured, or he become disgusted with reading. When he desired it, or was ready cheerfully to receive it, if his mother had leisure, he was instructed; and the object was kept before him, by telling him how he could read stories for himself, when he should learn. During this time his mind was active and inquisitive. His desire to know about every thing he saw grew stronger, and his numerous questions were answered, and objects worthy of his notice frequently pointed out to him. Before he was three years old, it was often observed that he spoke with remarkable distinctness, and used language and expressed ideas common to children twice as old as himself, rather than of those of his own age. Even at this age he preferred the company and conversation of men and women, to that of children, and would often leave his play, to sit and listen, and ask them questions. Never was there any difficulty in keeping him still, if he could be acquiring knowledge.

From two years old he constantly attended public worship on the Sabbath, if the weather permitted. He would generally, for the two first years, fall asleep in the course of the sermon, but gave little trouble. It was not expected that he would understand what he heard at this early age, but his parents wished to give the habit of attending the worship of God all the strength that early associations could give it. They have never doubted the advantage of it, for his desire to enjoy this privilege increased to the last, so

that nothing but sickness could induce him to stay from it, when permitted to go.

This attachment to public worship was particularly strong the last few months of his life. The coldest and most stormy Sabbaths of the last winter he insisted on attending, said he could go as well as his father—men went, and he must go. He often desired to attend the weekly female prayer meeting with his mother, and when there, was uniformly serious, attentive, and much interested.

His father and mother often told him, that God saw him, and noticed all he did and said, and even the feelings and thoughts he had; and that he noticed them especially in time of worship. They told him, that God requires us to worship him in spirit and truth, not merely with words and actions; and if the heart was not engaged, all the forms of worship were useless and hypocritical. The result of these instructions appeared in great seriousness of deportment in time of worship, as well as in a strong attachment to it in all its customary seasons. Even in his diversions, rarely was he known to trifle with the forms or customary language of devotion.

Sometimes, if he had been disobedient towards the close of the day, his parents refused to hear him pray, or to pray with him, when he went to bed. Nothing grieved him like this. He would beg of them to pray for him, say he was sorry he had been naughty; and if they refused, would weep and sob, till he fell asleep, apparently destitute of comfort. Sometimes he would be heard praying God to forgive him for being so naughty,

and make him a good boy, and bless his father and mother, and other friends.

It may here be remarked, that he early adopted, of his own accord, the custom of praying for every one in the family by name, and ever continued it daily.

A little incident before he was three years old, will show something of his character then. His father was one day absent from dinner, and no gentleman was present. When his mother, with some others, came to the table, he, without any thing being said, went to his father's place, stood up in the chair, and asked a blessing with strict propriety. When dinner was over, he gave thanks in like manner. This service he ever after claimed the *right* of performing, when no gentleman was present; and it is not known, that he ever failed, when at liberty to perform it. His language on such occasions was mostly texts of scripture aptly applied to the occasion; more particularly was this the case the last year, and persons present have often remarked the force and propriety with which such a child could use the language of the Bible. His friends can give no other reason for his commencing this exercise, than that he had always seen it performed by men, and as no one was present, he considered it as devolving on him. We might consider this the reason from the fact, that ever after he saw the difference, he seldom attempted to imitate females, but seemed to think, that whatever his father or other men did, he must do.

Soon after this his father was sick on a Sabbath, and unable to preach or attend meeting.

Just before the time of going, John came to his mother, and said, "Mother, father is sick, must I preach to the people to-day?" She asked, "What, my son, would you say to them?" He replied, "I will tell them that 'Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.'" The passage of scripture containing this he had probably heard read in family worship, or repeated in his mother's familiar conversations with him on the way of salvation. When he went that day to the meeting house, he passed by the pew where he usually sat, and went to the pulpit stairs with an intention to go up, probably expecting to preach.

Incidents like the above frequently occurred, and caused him to be regarded as an uncommon child, wherever he was known, and a professional gentleman in his native town probably expressed the general opinion, by saying, that "John had an old head." He will be remembered with lively interest for a long time in that place.

When John was about three years old, his parents removed from Brunswick, and resided in Gorham, in the same state, about a year. For some months they were unable to give much personal attention to his instruction. He was sent to school ten weeks, which was all he ever attended, any but a Sabbath School. Although he received much attention from the teacher, and was very happy with the children, he made no progress in learning to read. Whether schools conducted on the common plan are ever of advantage to children so young, is at least doubtful. Experience in regard to this child would

go to establish the opinion, that half an hour a day, devoted by the mother to her child, is worth more than all the instruction he can have at school. Of course nothing in this applies to infant schools.

When John was about three years and a half old, he began again to show a desire to learn to read, especially that he might read those stories which had been repeated to him from the Bible.

His father was, that year, from home most of the time, and the encouragement offered to him was, that if, when he should be four years old, he could read a chapter, his father would bring him a testament, and would be much pleased with him. This was all the stimulus he needed, and he applied himself so much to learning, that in two months he could read short verses, and in four he read a chapter with considerable ease, and was very fond of doing it daily.

From that time he generally read to his mother twice a day, either from a school-book for children, or from the Bible, which was his favorite book. As soon as he read fluently, the time devoted to it began to be one of vigorous mental effort for both mother and son; for he refused to pass over a verse, or even a word, that he did not understand, till he had sought an explanation. His questions were very numerous, and indicated much thought and intelligence. "What is the meaning of that word?" "What did he say so for?" "What did he mean?" "Who did he say this to?" "What did they do it for?" Questions like these, suggested by what he read, were almost incessant; and if the explanation

was not intelligible, that must be explained, till he thought he understood it.

Would parents encourage their children in asking questions, and gratify them with kind intelligible answers, we have reason to believe their taste for acquiring knowledge would be greatly strengthened, and many a young Franklin, or Doddridge, or Carey, or Henry Martyn would be seen early investigating the works of nature, and the intricacies of language, and the meaning of the word of God. And in what can a mother especially be more profitably or more pleasantly employed, than in feeding the immortal mind of her child with knowledge, and above all, with that truth, which is designed to sanctify the soul? The parents of this child now look back to no moments with such unmixed pleasure, as to those spent in encouraging and aiding him in obtaining a knowledge of truth. Their only regret is, that they did not give more attention to it. But alas! how many parents devolve this, as a disagreeable task, entirely on mercenary aid, and never know, from month to month, whether their children are making progress or not, or whether they are directed right or wrong. Do they know the intensity of a parent's love? Do they know the value of the treasure committed to them in their children's minds?

Would children too, who are able to read, but modestly and respectfully ask of their parents and others an explanation of what they do not know, they would find many not only ready to assist them, but many that would love them and respect them much more for their rational curiosity; and they would be abundantly rewarded

by a great increase of knowledge, and of happiness; and would be prepared for greater respectability, usefulness, and happiness in life, and probably for eternity.

It required much patience and steady kindness to attend to John's lessons, and explain all that he asked, and not to check his curiosity, or disgust him with the exercise. Often an hour was spent in going over ten or fifteen verses. He would frequently say: "Tell me all you *know* about it;" and if his parents told him they did not *know* anything about it, he would say; "Well, tell me what you *think*," or "what you *suppose*."

It is not designed to intimate, that none of these questions were unappropriate, or that all were dictated by a desire to learn the sense of what he read, but the most of them were quite appropriate, and manifested a strong desire for information of every kind.

This same thirst for knowledge was constantly manifest, and he rarely heard a conversation on a subject mentioned, about which he had not some questions to propose, either at the time, or afterwards. His eagerness was sometimes so great as to cause him to be troublesome, by interrupting conversation; asking what was meant, or to mention something which the conversation had suggested, and to ask information respecting it. He would desist at once, when told it was wrong; but as soon as an opportunity offered, he would generally pursue the subject.

When he was a little more than four years old, his father returned from an absence of several

months, and brought him not only the testaments promised, but also "Frank, in Early Lessons," and some others of Miss Edgeworth's works. His joy was very great. He immediately began to read in Frank one lesson a day. This opened a new field to his view, and gave new energy to his thirst for knowledge. On the journey to E. H. when his parents removed, he observed every thing that passed, and kept them busy explaining what he saw.

He now wished to see and learn every thing, as Frank had done, and in a few months he, by frequent importunity, had induced his father to take him to the cabinet maker's, wheel-wright's, shoe-maker's, black-smith's, and hatter's shops, and to the grist mill, and the paper mill. While there, he was constantly attentive to what was before him. He would look steadily for some time, and then question after question would follow, till he was satisfied. It was worth observing, that his questions generally related to the plainest and simplest processes. In regard to complicated machinery, or more difficult operations, he did not seem to understand enough to ask a question, and was satisfied with a very general description. How fully he understood what was explained to him, can only be known by his giving, sometimes, afterwards, an intelligible account, and perhaps asking questions about it, which had not at first been thought of.

This habit of seeking an explanation of whatever he saw, that interested him, he followed every where. Many things here named may be seen in other children, and they are mentioned

merely to remind others of the importance of keeping alive this desire for knowledge, and of directing it to profitable subjects, rather than to let it grow wild, and die for want of proper sustenance, and leave the young mind dull and indifferent to knowledge, or spend itself upon profitless subjects. No doubt the mind, as well as the body of the young, requires frequent but not long continued exercise, and may be trained to almost any habits of application. The mind of this child was often led, or rather directed, but never forced into any channel, and the acquisition of knowledge was to him a constant source of pleasure, and he seldom needed urging on that account. Till he became fatigued, he would go on of his own accord, and then his parents considered it injurious to press him.

One instance of his seeking information abroad may be mentioned, not as being very uncommon but as showing his constant habit. At his solicitation, his father, a few weeks before his last sickness, took him to H. Having some business at a little distance, he left him for a short time with the owner of a store. This gentleman soon, by kindness, won his confidence, and when his father returned, he found his son questioning the gentleman about how the weight, hung to the door, shut it. This gentleman has repeatedly since mentioned his surprise at the discernment and the powers of so young a child.

The correctness of his language has been mentioned. It is impossible to do full justice to his understanding in this respect, without protracting this memoir improperly. A few months be-

fore his death, when studying the fifth chapter of John's gospel, he came to his father, and pointing to the 20th verse, read: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in *the* which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice." "Father," said he, "what is that *the* there for?" He was told it was the custom to write so, when the Bible was translated. He observed: "I shall not use it, when I recite."

His father sometimes employed a leisure moment, when his son sat on his knee, in exercises of grammar, giving him wrong numbers, persons, genders, and cases to correct, interspersing among them correct expressions. It was rare, that he failed immediately to correct the wrong, or to retain the right. This he did solely by recollecting how he had heard language used, for he had never looked into a book on grammar.

When about four years old, he began to attend a Sabbath School. At first he recited a hymn as his lesson, but soon began to commit to memory two verses in the New Testament each morning. These were generally selected so as to include in the lesson for the week some interesting parable, or narrative. In this way, before he began to commit the gospel in course, he recited many parts of scripture, of which he was fond to the last.

About four months before his death, his father took the entire charge of this part of his instruction. He had gradually increased his daily lesson from two verses to four or five, and in a few weeks he went to seven and eight verses daily. These he would often commit to memory in

twenty minutes, or half an hour. At other times it took him longer, according as he felt, or as the verses were long or short, plain or difficult to be understood.

He had committed in course nearly all the first fourteen chapters of John. The last verse he recited was the 28th of that chapter: "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for the Father is greater than I." It was the day he was taken with his last sickness, and before he had finished, a gentleman came into his father's study, and he went down and finished reciting it to his mother.

In this daily exercise he gave great evidence of understanding the meaning of words. He would often, in reciting, give the meaning of a whole verse in different words from those in the text, and more frequently he used single words synonymous with those read. This was always permitted the first time reciting, but after that he was requested to recite the very words of the writer. Strangers have often remarked, that his language was that of a boy ten or twelve years old, and few of even that age give such constant attention to the propriety and meaning of what they say.

It may be desirable to give some account of the habitual disposition of this child, as it was remarked, that particular attention was given by his parents to its formation, even from a very early period.

Some persons may suppose, from what has been

or will hereafter be said, that he must have been very still, sedate, and averse to play; but the very reverse was the case. Few children are uniformly so lively, active, and happy. He loved play, and was always active, when not seeking information. But never did he seem to take such delight in any sport, as when he could induce his father to spend a few minutes in diverting him. Then he seemed perfectly happy, and his voice would be heard in laughter over the house. With children of his own age, and somewhat older, he generally took the lead; and would find them ample employment, but never wished to engage in the rough sports of older boys. He always preferred exercise that could be useful to somebody, to mere sport.

It was, from the first, extremely rare to see his anger excited, and when it was moved, a few minutes were sufficient to produce entire calm. He never retained anger, or indulged in revenge, or seemed to remember an injury. The sun never went down on his wrath. If denied any thing on which he had set his heart, he seemed to feel keenly for a moment, but then returned to his former cheerfulness, as if nothing had happened; and it was often remarked, that he accommodated himself to necessary circumstances with remarkable ease.

His affection for those to whom he became attached, was strong and durable. His love for his parents and sisters seemed to know no bounds. He did not part with either of them for an hour, without manifesting it; and when he met them again, it was with uniform pleasure. About the

time they were expected to return, he would watch continually, and run with the utmost eagerness to meet and kiss them. His parents were always his chosen friends and confidants, and the expectation of pleasing them, and making them happy, was the strongest inducement that could be used with him. When his father was absent, every letter his mother wrote, he wished to dictate some message of love, and to make some mark, that his father might see. At such times the greatest reward he could receive, when he had conducted well, was for his mother to write how he had conducted ; and nothing did he dread so much, as that she should inform his father, when he had done wrong, and it would make him unhappy. If he had offended, or grieved his parents, he seemed very unhappy, till he could become reconciled, and see them smile, when he manifested great joy. If either of them was unwell, he would sit beside them, and wish to know if he could do any thing for them, and if permitted, would run eagerly to do it. His affection for his sisters, as well as his parents, was manifested in a thousand indescribable ways, every day, and seemed to run into and influence all his conduct. For the whole winter, he brought his sister in his arms, nearly every morning, from the bed to the fire, in another room, saying she must not get her feet cold on the floor, and this while his own were equally exposed. If he did any thing wrong, when abroad, tell him, if he did so, people would blame his father, and he rarely ever repeated it. Would children be always as careful of the happiness and reputation of their

parents, as was this little boy, they would be saved from many distressing feelings, and many bitter reproaches; and the blessing of God would no doubt constantly attend them. Can there be a more lovely sight, than a family dwelling together in such unity, each constantly more anxious for the happiness of the others, than for his own?

Among the most remarkable features of this child's character was his habit of self-denial. If any thing of which children are fond, such as cake, or sweetmeats, or raisins, or nuts, or the like, was given him abroad, he would often refuse to taste it, till he had brought it home, and divided it with his sister, and frequently he gave her the largest portion. Such little luxuries he often laid by for days, and then gave a good part away, generally wishing all about him to partake a little, as well as himself. His parents had taken much pains to cultivate this disposition, and it became a very prevalent motive in his daily conduct. He had never been taught to compare himself with other children, or allowed to suppose, that the attainments or the enjoyments of others could in any way diminish his own. He therefore knew nothing of rivalship, or emulation. To know more than others, or to have more of any thing, or to be treated better, never seemed to be an object of desire, nor was he at all troubled at others being superior to him. But one instance of jealousy of this kind is recollected. His mother gave him and his sister, one day, each a piece of cake, and told her, that, as John was the oldest, he ought to have the largest piece.

Soon after, another piece was given to each, and the largest piece to her. He immediately remonstrated, saying with great earnestness, "I am the oldest, and the largest piece belongs to me." It was given him, when at once it appeared, that he contended only for what he considered right, and not for rivalship, for he immediately gave her a considerable part of his.

The progress he made in knowledge was without any stimulus from emulation. He was never exhorted to do better than others, or led to believe he knew more than other children, or did better. To please his parents and to obey God, were the motives presented to urge him on, when he needed it, except now and then a trifling reward, generally not promised, as an inducement to exertion. The way of knowledge was made pleasant to his view, and he eagerly pursued it, without thinking whether others were before or behind him.

Can it be needful for any child to have his jealousy of others constantly cherished, and his selfishness fostered, to urge him to any commendable attainment? Will it ever make the heart better, for a child to be mortified by being told of his own inferiority, or rendered vain by an idea that he is superior to others whom he daily sees? Is it not cherishing the very spirit of the fallen angels?

If others told John of his superiority, he was not pleased with it. His Sabbath School teacher once told him he got the best lesson of any boy in the school. He came home, and said, "Mother, Mr. P. says I get the best lesson of any boy

in the school. Is it so? A'nt he flattering me?" This was the manner in which he always received such expressions.

His desire to be of some use to others, and his determination to do whatever he could for himself, were very early manifested, and being encouraged by his parents, became prominent traits in his character. At last he disliked having any thing done for him, that he could do for himself, or thought he could. Tell him any thing he could do, would be useful to any one, and he would do all in his power, and appear extremely happy, when he had succeeded. To help his parents gave him the utmost delight, and he rarely seemed to be too much fatigued to attempt it. When little more than three years old, he would do an errand in the neighborhood with perfect correctness, and always return immediately. No persuasion or prospect of pleasure could induce him to stay, after his errand was done, unless he had permission.

A single instance, selected from many, will show what were his habits in this. When about four years old, he was sent to several houses to invite company to tea. The families were named in a certain order, and the individuals to be invited in order. He went to the first family, and invited each individual, one after another, in the precise order in which they had been named to him, although to do it he was under the necessity of going out to invite some, and then returning to invite some whom he had seen. Then he went to the other houses in order, and invited each individual named as before, all with perfect

precision. At one of the houses he was requested to tarry, but replied, he must go to another house. This was the last in the order named. He went, and did his errand without going in. But while the door was open, he saw a bird in a cage, which he thought very pretty. Such a sight he had not been accustomed to, and he was invited, and even urged to go in and see it, but he replied, "My mother told me not to stop," and ran home as fast as he could. As soon as he had repeated the several answers to his message, he began to tell what a pretty bird he saw, seeming much interested. He was asked, "Did you stop to see it?" "No," was his reply, "you told me to be quick. May I go back and see it, mother?" No instance is recollected in which he failed to do an errand correctly, and return as he was bid. If when going or returning he was accosted by any one, he generally answered without stopping, and would hold no conversation to delay him.

One day, when going or returning with some message, a boy much older than himself met him, and began asking him some impertinent questions, and to make some rude remarks. John looked at him calmly, and said, "It is *very* improper for you to talk to me so," and went on; nor could the boy induce him to tarry a moment, or utter another word.

Children who will follow his example in these things, will be a great blessing to their parents, and be very happy in doing good. There was no one of the commands repeated by John so often, as the fifth: "Honor thy father and thy

mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," was often heard from him. He obeyed it in an uncommon degree, and if he had not long life on earth, there is the best reason to believe he enjoys a greater blessing in heaven.

Ever after he was four years old, and often before, he went almost daily to the post office, to carry or bring letters and papers, although a part of the time half a mile distant, and indeed did most of his parents' errands in the neighborhood, with the utmost promptness and accuracy.

The feelings of this little boy were very tender, and so much excited when told of any one in distress, that his parents were obliged to avoid telling him, or reading to him, the most affecting stories. When told of children who were destitute of food, he repeatedly refused to eat, so much did he feel for them; and when told of children who had lost their parents, and had no one to take care of them, he would weep and sob, and beg to know what became of them, and if they were good, and had God for their father?

From the time he was less than three years old, he voluntarily abstained from the use of sugar, and other luxuries, to obtain a few cents to contribute for the relief of distress, or to send Bibles and the gospel to the destitute. He was never urged to do this, but continued it more than two years steadily, although naturally very fond of these things. While a cent remained in his box, he desired to give something at every public contribution, but rarely did he wish to use any of his money to purchase toys or luxuries.

When a poor person called at the house he would give all he had, if the person seemed in want, or told of children destitute of the comforts of life.

Some of the most pleasant visits he made, were at the house of a poor widow, when he was permitted to carry her milk, or any other food, and he would go through snow, or wet, or cold, for this purpose, when he would scarcely go out of doors to play. To perform acts of this kind his parents never denied him the opportunity, wishing him early to learn, that doing good was to be the business of his life.

If he heard that a person was poor, the very next time he had an opportunity alone with that person, he would ask if they had things comfortable, and offer a supply, if answered in the negative. So habitual was this with him, that his parents were obliged to avoid mentioning such cases, lest by indiscretion he should hurt the persons' feelings. So much alive were his sympathies to the sufferings of others, that it was often said he was hardly fit to live in the world, where sin and sorrow abound. The last time he performed an act of this kind, was about a fortnight before his death. A woman called at the house, and told a story of distress in her family, that touched his feelings. He looked as if desiring to give something, and his mother told him he might. His box was handed to him, and he took out two thirds of all the money he had, and gave it, and seemed satisfied. Such acts he never mentioned even to his father, unless reminded of them, and never seemed to think of

deserving credit by them. His delight was in doing them, not hearing of them.

His sympathies were early excited in behalf of those destitute of the gospel, and he often declared, that when he should be a man, like his father, he would go and preach Jesus Christ to them. It is not known, that this was ever told him, but at times it seemed the most settled purpose of his mind, at others he told of preaching the gospel to those about him.

His feelings of kindness to all, affection for his friends, and patience under any suffering, increased by exercise, and very rapidly towards the close of his life on earth. Never was his improvement in every lovely trait of character, or in knowledge, so rapid, as for a few months before his sickness. It was remarked, that the indescribable something, which gains the affections of every one, and secures by an eloquence that no one wishes to resist, whatever it pleads for, were becoming more and more discernible in him, and gaining attention every where, and exciting high expectations among all who knew him.

But the most important part of his character—that which, it is believed, gave consistency, moral worth, and uncommon loveliness to the whole, remains to be mentioned. It is not doubted by any who had daily opportunities to observe him, especially the last few months, that he was truly pious, and his parents believe he was so from very early life. At what time he was born again, they do not pretend to say, or even to conjecture; but from what they now recollect, they believe it

was before he was two years old. At that age, from the nature of the case, evidences of piety must be quite ambiguous, but the steady growth of principles prevalent in later life can be traced to even that early period. We should remember, that a child will not appear like an adult. However pious, he is still a child, and his piety will appear connected with all the playfulness, and every innocent action of childhood, many of which would be altogether unbecoming a Christian of adult age. *True religion is seen in the pure and benevolent spirit, with which the appropriate actions and duties of each age, and each situation are performed;* and conduct in every respect suitable to a pious adult, is as inappropriate to a pious child, as that of a child to such an adult. Is there not a very generally prevailing error on this subject, and much injury done by expecting too much from children who seem to have pious feelings? Are they not often too readily given up, on seeing lightness and playfulness in them, instead of being held up and instructed, so as to lead them in the way of holiness? Is not this well worth the serious consideration of parents, Sabbath School teachers, and ministers? Does not the restraint imposed on the young, when they appear ready to attend to religion, often render it irksome, and thus repel them into the regions of error and sin?

It was observed, that John was early a child of much prayer, and when his parents gave him up to God in baptism, it was with strong desires for his early conversion and sanctification, together with much confidence in the covenant of

grace, as belonging to the children of believers thus dedicated. They felt, that they had solemnly devoted this child to God, and bound themselves to educate him for God's service. In performing this duty, they endeavored to give him a knowledge of divine truth, while very young. The fundamental doctrines of Christianity were taught him as soon as he could understand them, and explained and illustrated in various ways, till he seemed to know what was meant, and to see the duties involved in these doctrines. He was told often, that God made and supports every thing; that he is every where present, and knows all we do and think; that he loves those who are good, and condemns the wicked; that all are from the beginning sinful, and must repent, and become good, before they can please God; that we should always be sorry, when we sin, and pray for Christ's sake to be forgiven; that we should believe all we find in the Bible, and love God on account of his goodness, and love men because he commands it: that we should obey all his commands, and pray to him for all we need, and thank him for all we enjoy; that Jesus Christ died to save sinners, and will give eternal life to all who come to God by him. These, with other important truths, such as, that the soul will never die; that we must all give account of our life at the day of judgment; that the bodies of all will be raised, and the righteous will be eternally happy, and the wicked eternally miserable, were early taught him, so as to influence his daily practice.

Very early he began to pray, first in a simple

verse taught him, then to use the Lord's prayer, and as that is too comprehensive to be readily understood by such a child, he was taught to add a simple petition for a holy heart, and that God would bless him, and keep him alive, and bless his father, and mother, and other friends. He was told to ask God for whatever he might need; and to remember he is always present, and knows what we pray for, and whether we really desire him to give it us.

His parents endeavored to teach him what is meant by praying in the heart somewhat in the following manner. "My son, if you are hungry, or if you wish very much to go with us, when we ride, when you ask for something to eat, or to ride, you feel earnest about it. This asking in earnest, is asking in your heart. So if you ask any thing of God earnestly, you pray in your heart." Other qualities of real prayer were illustrated in the same manner, but with more words.

The winter before John was two years old, a female prayer meeting was held weekly at his father's house, and he generally spent the time in the room with those who met, and knelt with them in prayer. Soon he was observed attempting to pray in a corner of the room by himself. Within a year he was known frequently to retire for prayer, and generally engaged in it of his own accord, when he lay down at night. This was continued with scarcely any interruption ever after. This might be considered merely an imitation of the practices of his parents, if it had not been continued, and connected with many other indications of piety, and attachment to religious

duties. His attachment to public worship has already been mentioned. It is not recollected, that he was ever unwilling to attend a religious meeting, however much fatigued. Generally he counted it a very great privation, if prevented attending.

Family prayer he seemed to expect as much as his daily bread, and could hardly be made to believe any one would omit it. This appeared, when he was between two and three years old, on one occasion perhaps worth mentioning. His father was absent one morning, and there being company, his mother did not conduct family worship. Soon after the usual time, passing through the room where he and a domestic were sitting, she saw they had each a book, as was common. Knowing what they expected, but unprepared to pray, she sat down and read in the Bible. John then knelt. She asked him, "Do you wish to pray, my son?" "Yes," was his answer. "You may say your prayer."

He repeated the Lord's prayer, and continued on his knees. She asked, "Do *you* wish to pray?—Mother feels that she cannot this morning." He repeated the Lord's prayer again, and continued still kneeling. Seeing they did not move, he turned to the girl, and said, "Mary, kneel," then to his mother, and said, "Mother, kneel." She asked, "Do you wish *me* to pray, my son?" He replied, "Yes." She took him by the hand, and told him they would go to her chamber, and pray. At this, he seemed overjoyed.

It will be readily supposed, that this was not

forgotten. It taught his parents the importance and necessity of entire regularity with such a child, and never to omit a duty, if they would have him regard it properly.

Incidents of this kind abound in his life, but to mention here one more will suffice.

When he was about four years old, his mother carried him on a visit to a relative in P. The family consisted of an elderly gentleman and lady, the former not a professor of religion. The day after they arrived was the Sabbath. There was no family prayer in the morning, and his mother had retired to her room, leaving him with the family. About the usual time of morning prayer he took a Bible, laid it in a chair, read a few verses, and knelt down and prayed. He asked, that the Lord Jesus would be with his people that day, and bless them, and give them repentance for sin, and faith in him. He prayed for several things beside, expressing most of his petitions in scripture language, and with the utmost solemnity of manner. His mother came into the room just before he closed, and found the aged couple in tears. The lady soon after informed her, what he had prayed for, and said she never heard a prayer that affected her so much. She seemed almost sure, that this child had been sent there for her husband's salvation; but it is feared the impression on his mind was not enduring. The next morning the same duty was performed, while his mother was present, and her impression was, that his prayer was as appropriate as many heard in a social prayer meeting.

The young woman who lives with his parents, says, he never omitted asking a blessing and returning thanks at the table, when his father and mother were absent; and it is certain he was never told to perform any such thing. On such occasions his prayer consisted of a few well chosen expressions from the Bible, or allusions to Bible history. As a specimen, the words of one such prayer may be given. It was uttered a few months before his death, when he sat down to dinner with two females. "O Lord! bless us, and bless this food. Give us new hearts. And O Lord! make us perfect and upright, as thy servant Job was." This last expression he had never heard at table, but he had within a short time read the first chapter of Job, and appeared much interested in it. This may likewise show something of his habit of remembering and applying what he read.

At an early period in life he was accustomed, when told he had done wrong, to retire to a corner of the room, and sometimes to another room, and pray for pardon, and that God would make him a better boy. This was at first suggested to him, but became so common, that it was feared at one time, he might regard it rather as a penance than a duty, and it was not encouraged on every occasion. When he had offended in any matter of importance, one of his parents retired with him, and after admonition and prayer, and if absolutely necessary, a gentle chastisement, he was left alone, to repent and pray for pardon. He would spend some minutes alone, and then return to his parents humble, and seek a reconciliation, when he seemed very happy.

The last time he was ever punished for a fault, his mother retired with him, and told him she must whip him, as she had threatened in case he should commit the fault, of which he had now been guilty. This he always dreaded very much, and now he begged, and promised, and wept, but his mother told him she must do as she had declared. When he found he could not prevail, he suddenly stopped, and said, "Well, if you *will* whip me, kneel down and pray first." After prayer he submitted without the least complaint. His mother then determined, that she would not again use the rod, except in some extreme case.

During the last year or two he was frequently heard in a room alone, praying for himself or some other person, and commonly continued several minutes in the exercise, his prayer consisting mostly of such passages of scripture as he had heard used in prayer, or had lately read, and which seemed to him appropriate; and they were generally repeated one after the other in proper order, connected by his own words. From frequent exercise in this duty, he had become quite ready in the use of the appropriate language of prayer, and seldom appeared at a loss for words. The same remarks will apply to the prayers which he made with his sister, and when he was permitted to pray with either of his parents. One of the last times when he prayed with his mother, he continued near five minutes in an appropriate manner, without any want of thoughts or words, with great apparent seriousness and feeling, and with entire confidence in the promises of God which he recollected.

It should not be understood, that there was *never* any thing in his prayers, that would have been improper in those of a man, or that they were generally equal to those of a pious person of intelligence and riper years. They were the prayers of a child, but of one deeply impressed with gospel truth, and uncommonly well acquainted with the language of scripture and of prayer.

From his father's employment, no doubt, he first received the impression, that he should be a preacher of the gospel, and began early to hold meetings with his sister, and other small children, generally with great apparent seriousness. His discourses delivered from a chair, or some other elevated stand, sometimes continued several minutes, and showed great retentiveness and promptness of memory, and a clear understanding of many parts of scripture, and of what he had heard in public worship. His parents did not discourage this practice, but took occasion from it to impress his mind more deeply with the awful solemnity of God's worship, and the importance of treating the gospel with deep reverence, and likewise to correct any faults in his enunciation. His sentences were generally pronounced in a clear, natural, and forcible manner, with much animation, and showed much liveliness of fancy, and some good taste in the selection of language.

His impressions in regard to his being destined for a preacher were early and abiding. Before he was four years old, his mother asked him, at a time when she was writing to his father,

what she should write, as his word. He replied without the least hesitation, "Tell my father, his son is growing up to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ." On this subject nothing had been said to him for weeks.

It may be proper here to give an instance of his discernment in regard to the conduct proper for Christians. When he was about four years old, his uncle, at tea one evening, was repeating some remarks he had heard against the temperance reformation. John asked, "Why do you talk so, S.?"

His uncle asked, "How?"

J. "By talking such things."

S. "How should I talk, John?"

J. "About Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save sinners. If you love Jesus, you will talk about him. I think you don't love Jesus."

His uncle asked, why he thought so.

J. "Because, if you loved him, you would talk about him; and you don't talk about him, so you don't love him."

At this time his mother wrote to his father, then absent. "This evening J. has been much affected by the account of Mr. Richmond's two children, who died, and asked with tears when he would die. On my answering, that he must die sometime, but God only knew when; he asked, if he would go to that wicked place? He was much affected for so young a child. I know, that it is possible all this goodness may pass away, like the early dew, yet I cannot but hope, and sometimes feel assured, that the work of grace will be early in his heart."

If his piety may be judged by the test which he applied to his uncle, there can be no doubt, for scarcely did a few hours pass without his saying much about the Saviour. He seemed constantly interested in his character, and this increased most rapidly for a few months before the close of his life.

From an early time of life it was manifest, that John thought much while silent, especially on religious subjects, and prepared his questions with deliberation, and determined to be satisfied before he left the subject.

When between three and four years old, his mind at one time seemed much employed in thinking of death and the grave. After being silent for some time one day, he asked how people got out of the grave. He was told the spirit is not there, and the body is but dust. Some time after he suddenly asked :

" Mother, what kind of body am I going to have, when I rise from the dead ?"

Immediately the fifth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians was read to him. But he was not content without asking numerous questions, and having the whole cleared up. When he ceased, he was asked if he understood it. He answered, " yes," and appeared satisfied on that point nearly ever after. His mother could not at once tell where he had received the idea of the resurrection, but soon recollected, that several months before, on the death of a child in the neighborhood, she had told him something of it.

After he began to attend public worship on the Sabbath, he was rarely if ever absent, when

the Lord's supper was administered. He was extremely attentive during that service, and at times appeared in deep thought. After this he asked much about this sacrament. He quoted at one time the Saviour's words: "This is my flesh," and "This is my blood," &c.; and seemed to think it was the real flesh and blood of Christ, that the communicants partook of. His mother told him the bread and wine represented the flesh and blood of Christ, and illustrated her meaning by showing him the print representing the late Dr. Payson, whose memoir she happened to have in her hand, saying, "This picture represents Dr. Payson, but you see it is not he." But he maintained his point, saying, "Christ says, 'Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you.'" His mother observed, he would make a good Lutheran, and left the subject for another time.

For several months before his death, he was very desirous to partake of this sacrament, and repeatedly spoke of his desire to his mother. She told him she feared he did not love the Lord Jesus Christ, and was not prepared, but he insisted, that he did. She then told him, that when he arrived at a suitable age, if he gave evidence of love to God, he should partake. He repeatedly asked his father, when the people would eat the body, and drink the blood of Christ again.

His parents had avoided leading his mind to any of those doctrines of religion, which are hard to explain to a young or uninformed mind, endeavoring to keep his attention on the simple

facts recorded in the Bible, and the duties there made known. But although the facts were presented separately, he would bring them together, and make his own inferences, and conclusions. He was taught to pray to God, "Our Father who art in heaven." He had read in the first of John's gospel, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God," and he was informed that the Word is Jesus Christ. These he brought together in the following manner. One morning, when he had slept with his mother, he waked her, and then lay some time silent, when he commenced: "Mother, there are two Gods." She replied, "No, my son, there is but one only living and true God." He said, "Yes, there *is*, two Gods." She said, "No, but one God." But he insisted on his point, saying, "God our Father is one God, and Jesus Christ is one God, and that makes two Gods." This made it necessary to explain this mystery, as far as possible.

At another time he suddenly broke silence, saying, "Mother, God is a sinner."

She exclaimed, "God a sinner! What do you mean, my son?"

J. "I mean, God is a sinner."

M. "What makes you think so?"

J. "Because God made us, and we are sinners, and so he must be a sinner."

His parents knew not where to look for this connexion of thoughts, unless it be traced to an original propensity of mind to expect a similarity between cause and effect. It may be, that some idea of hereditary depravity had been given him,

and he drew this conclusion from that, but it is not known, that this was the fact.

One instance selected from many may serve to show how he heard preaching. When about four years old, he attended the religious anniversaries in Maine. In one of the sermons the name JEHOVAH was used. He was sitting by his mother's side, and, looking at her, whispered, "Who does he mean by JEHOVAH?" She replied, "God." He asked, "Why don't he say *God*, then?" When attending meeting, he would often be seen looking round, as if inattentive to what was said, but some time after, it would appear by his remarks, that he had heard and understood the discourse, and remembered much of what he scarcely seemed to heed.

Some months before his death, he heard, at meeting, the hymn beginning, "Life is the time to serve the Lord." It fixed his attention, and when he came home, he requested to have it found for him, and read it, till he could repeat the whole. Ever after, it was his favorite hymn, and he repeated, and tried to sing it, on almost every occasion, where he needed a hymn. A few other hymns he noticed in the same way, and committed to memory. The last was that beginning, "Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove." In this way too he learnt many texts of scripture, which he often repeated, telling who had repeated them, and where he had heard them. This was encouraged by his parents, as likely to induce him to be more attentive to preaching, and to every duty of devotion, and at the same time, storing his mind with divine knowledge.

When the family removed from G. to E. H., a boy, son of the minister of the former place, with whom John was well acquainted, was very sick, not expected to recover. For him he was very anxious, often prayed for him, and inquired if he would go to heaven when he died. The boy died a few months after, and when John heard of it, he was deeply affected, and asked many questions about his piety, and what had become of him, whether he was happy in heaven or not. When told it was hoped he had become a good pious boy before he died, he seemed satisfied, as if he considered this the only important consideration. After this he frequently took the newspaper containing the account of this boy's death, and conversed about him, and two other boys, who had died, before, in the same town, saying, that three of his companions were gone to eternity, and wishing to know, if they were happy in heaven.

In the month of February there was a conference of churches in E. H., continuing a part of three days; and before the close a revival of religion was manifestly in progress. John took a most lively interest in this meeting, and although it was extremely cold weather, he attended steadily, forenoon and afternoon, appearing to listen with great intensity. Christians were much awakened, and no one more than this child. From that time, his progress in religion was very rapid, and scarcely any other subject could fix his attention for any time. His conversation with his parents was from that time almost exclusively religious. He would often break off in

the midst of his most interesting play, and begin to speak of some religious truth, or some event interesting to the Christian heart, and wished, more than ever, all the information he could obtain respecting the truths and events of our religion.

In the course of the meeting, the Rev. Mr. M. made an address to parents, and related an anecdote of a woman who had a sick child, that begged her to pray for her. The mother replied that she could not. The child entreated, and could scarcely be consoled, when the mother refused. John's feelings were much excited, especially, as he heard the child died without having any one to pray for her. He came home, and related to his mother, with many tears, what he had heard, and added, "O mother, I wish I had been there, I would have prayed for her."

Soon after this, the young woman living with his parents appeared convicted of sin, and in distress. Conversing with his mother, John asked, "Why don't she repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

The next day, seeing her in tears, he asked her what was the matter. His mother hearing him said, "She is anxious about her soul." "Well," he replied, "why don't she give herself up to Jesus Christ? He *died* to save sinners."

Her case continued to interest him much, and he frequently exhorted her to give up her heart immediately to the Saviour. Once, when he asked her if she had done it, she replied, "No."

J. "Well, why don't you?" She said, "I can't, John."

J. "You must pray."

She asked, "Can't you pray for me?"

J. "The Bible says we must all pray for ourselves."

But he did often pray for her, and once, when at prayer in a room by himself, he was heard praying, "O Lord, bless that girl in this house named R. who is anxious about her soul, and give her a new heart, and, O Lord, make her holy, and prepare her for heaven." It may be here remarked, that he had adopted, contrary to the custom he had uniformly witnessed, the practice of praying for every individual by name, probably as conveying, in his view, a clearer and more direct understanding of his meaning.

Whenever his father returned from visiting the anxious, he was much interested to hear of those who hoped they had been born again; and seemed much engaged every where, conversing much about the truths of the gospel, heaven, and the state of the blessed there. The young woman living with his parents, says, that for some time, every morning when he came from his bed, he repeated the Saviour's words: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." This may show something of the direction of his mind; but it is impossible for one not with him, to know how much his thoughts ran on subjects of this kind, or how constant was their influence on his whole conduct for weeks before his sickness. No one else

can see the expression of his animated countenance, while conversing on religion, or the intensity of his application while he listened to others, nor know how frequently be alluded to these topics, nor observe the earnest, though gentle, manner with which he urged others to perform their duty to God, and secure the salvation of their souls. To know how much influence the principles of religion exerted on him, they must have seen him at his play, and heard his conversation while in bed, and especially when he sat with his mother, when no other person was present, and heard his constant language. Then they would have said, "His conversation is in heaven," and he is rapidly fitting for its blessed society, and its happy abodes and employments.

A few weeks before he was taken sick, the only son of a neighbor died. He was a fine, amiable, intelligent boy, about twelve years old, much doated on by his family, and beloved by all who knew him. John heard of his sickness and death, and when his father attended the funeral, he was so very anxious to go, that he was permitted. In conversing with the mourners, his father remarked, among other things, the danger of parents making idols of their children, that is, loving them more than God, especially when they are uncommonly amiable and intelligent, and said, that God would, most likely, in mercy, take away from his children whatever they loved more than him.

This funeral made a very strong impression upon John's mind. He looked with great earn-

estness at the body, and seemed in deep thought some time after he returned home, when he suddenly asked, "Father, do you make an idol of me? Do you love me more than God?"

Many of his remarks, till his sickness, showed that he felt a lively interest in that boy's case. The same evening his mother conversed freely with him about death, and the necessary preparation for heaven. He seemed confident, that he was prepared, and should go to heaven, when he should die; and this because he knew he loved the Lord Jesus Christ. He asked many questions about the boy, whose funeral he had attended, and seemed much to regret, that he could learn but little of his religious character.

One incident, which came to the knowledge of his parents, after his death, will show his fearlessness in what he esteemed duty. The circumstances are here given, as *reported* to them. One day his mother sent him on some errand at a distance. Several boys were playing in the street, some of whom asked him where he was going, and he told them. Soon, one of them, seeing him crossing the street, in the direction of a store, where a boy, perhaps ten years old, was attending, told him that was not the way to the place where he was going. He replied, "I know it, but I am going to tell that boy there, not to sell rum, for it is wicked, and my father says it is. He went to the door, and told the boy, "It is wicked for you to sell rum, my father says it is, and I say it is, and you had better be at school." This was entirely of his own motion, neither did he ever tell his parents what he had

done. They heard it as coming from the boy reproved. His father recollects his asking, some time before, if it was wicked to sell rum, and that he answered, he thought it so.

Some of his last prayers, previous to his sickness, were considered, at the time, remarkably solemn and appropriate, consisting mostly of passages of scripture, aptly applied. It is recollected, that he prayed much for sanctification, and fitness for heaven, frequently using the expressions, "Sanctify me through thy truth, thy word is truth," and "Give me a holy heart, and fit me for heaven."

Might it not be well for older children, and even adults, to reflect on the example of this little boy, less than five years old, and inquire, whether they are as well prepared for sickness and death, and to meet their God? Do the readers of this, perform every duty as fearlessly, and seek as constantly to be united to Christ by a living faith, as he? Are they as much engaged for the souls of others, and is their conversation as much in heaven? Let each remember, that only they who have the spirit of Christ, are his, and only such as keep his commandments will have a right to the tree of life, and will be received at last into the holy city. Let each then live in the constant performance of every duty, and so be prepared for his last end.

It now only remains to give an account of the sickness and death of this dear boy. All his loveliness, and intelligence, and piety, and promise of usefulness in the world, could not shield him from this common lot of all the descendants

of fallen man. In this war there is no discharge, but the people of God, even if little children, will conquer death itself, through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.

March 2d, his sister was taken with canker rash. John was extremely kind and attentive to her, often lying down with her, and condoling her, and even seemed desirous to have the disease, that he might bear her company. For three days he imagined sometimes, that he had it. On the fifth, while in the morning learning his usual lesson in the Testament, he complained to his father, that he was sick. He was told it was probably imagination, and was directed to go on with his lesson. He obeyed, but a few minutes after, looked up and said, "I am sick, father, *certainly*;" at the same time smiling, but looking very pale. He was told to go down, and soon the physician was called, who prescribed the usual medicines with apparent success, so that in a few days he was relieved, and in ten appeared quite well, except that he was feeble, compared with what he was in health. His father then went to New Haven, to attend a four days' meeting, and John went, at his own desire, to visit a family in the parish, and tarried several days. He came home on Sabbath morning, when the family came to meeting, and although he looked pale, he was so anxious to attend public worship, from which sickness had kept him three sabbaths, that he was permitted, and went all day. He was very attentive and solemn during worship, and repeated the text and another verse connected with it, when he came home.

This was a somewhat common practice, although never imposed on him as a task.

During this visit, several things transpired, that show the direction of his thoughts, and the nature of his feelings. He was observed to be more still and reserved in the presence of the adults of the family, but when only the younger children were present, he was talkative, and often introduced religious conversation. At one time in particular, he was heard exhorting these children, in the most solemn and earnest manner, to repent, and prepare to meet their God. He repeated many of the most solemn warnings of God's word, and seemed so earnest, as if he would take no denial, but was bent on leading them to repentance. One of them asked him, "What shall I do?" He replied, "You must pray." She said, "I do." He answered, "But you do not pray enough. A thousand times would not be enough for me." He had several such conversations with them during the visit.

When about to leave the house, he said, "Now, H. and C., I shall be taken sick, and die, and you must remember what I have said to you. You must remember my dying words." It is not known how he came by that impression, but so his words proved, to these children. They never heard his voice again. Had his friends thought him in immediate danger of death, these, and other children, would have been invited to see him; but he was gone before the opportunity occurred, and they will meet him next in eternity. May it be a happy meeting, in the kingdom of heaven.

When he came home that morning, he said, "I shall never go to Mr. R.'s again." His mother asked, "My son, what do you mean?" He then, noticing her surprise, and perhaps thinking she disapproved of what he said, remarked, "I shall not go there for ten years."

That evening he conversed on religion with his usual interest and intelligence.

Monday, his neck appeared swelled, and he complained of being unwell, saying he was sick in his legs, and lay down on the carpet, as if fatigued. Gentle cathartics were administered, and an ointment applied to the neck, which reduced the swelling, but Tuesday, he grew worse, and the physician was called. He appeared in danger of lung fever, but medicine produced a good effect, and Wednesday, he appeared better. Thursday evening, he was suddenly attacked with an excruciating pain in the left side. So severe was the pain, that he could with the utmost difficulty refrain from shrieking. A blister had, on Tuesday, been applied to his chest, and he was told it was to relieve pain, and although he suffered much from it, he now begged his father to put on another blister. The doctor came just at this time, and applied a blister, and administered medicine which gave relief from the pain. When sick before, he had been loath to take medicine, but now, he took it with readiness, when told what it was for. That night he desired his father to take care of him, and appeared much pleased when told he would not leave him. He desired his father to pray, that he might be holy, and fit for heaven, and rested

some in sleep. The next day he appeared better, and that and the next day talked much, seeming very animated, especially when speaking of religion. He was frequently requested not to talk so much, but soon forgot the caution, when his countenance would assume a most animated expression, his eyes sparkling, and his voice in the sweetest tones uttered the feelings of a heart full of his favorite subject. At one time, alluding to his conversation with the children in his last visit, he said, "Mother, I spoke my words of death to H. and C."

She said: "Your words of death! my son, what do you mean?"

He replied: "I mean my words of death. I told them, if they did not repent, and love the Lord Jesus Christ, they would not go to heaven. I told them they *must* love Jesus Christ, and if they did not, God would *laugh* at them, for he says: "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

Here his countenance appeared lighted up with the most animating interest, and he used a strong emphasis, and brought down his hand with an emphatic gesture. He continued: "I told them if they did not love Jesus Christ, they would go to hell, and God would say to them 'Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' But I told them, if they did love the Lord Jesus Christ, they would go to heaven, and he would say to them; 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.'"

His mother asked him: "Did you really say so, John?"

He answered: "Yes, was it right mother?"

She feared at the time, that his disease had affected his memory, and he had only intended to say it, or imagined he said it. This had early been the tendency of his mind, and till within a year, he did not seem fully in his narratives, to distinguish between what was real, and what he had dreamed or imagined. But within a year he had become very particular in regard to truth, and so careful that it was with difficulty his parents could induce him to promise any thing positively, and unconditionally, he seeming to fear he might fail in the fulfilment, and be guilty of falsehood. He would therefore say, when asked if he would do any thing at a future period: "I will endeavor to," or: "I think I will." His mother did not know but by reason of his disease this caution might be forgotten, but on inquiry of the family where he was visiting, and of the children with whom he conversed, it was found, that he had used this language, and much more of like import, and with great earnestness and solemnity, as though determined not to give over, till he should lead those children to repentance. Will not the reader join with the writer in the earnest prayer: "God grant, that his efforts may not be lost on those for whose salvation he appeared so earnest, nor upon others who may read this narrative?"

Had his parents supposed John so near his end, they might have recorded many striking sayings uttered during these two days, and would have

more frequently encouraged a full expression of his feelings on many occasions. But as his lungs were inflamed, and his body growing weaker, they deemed it necessary to repress his disposition to talk, and as they hoped to see their son well again, they kept no notes of his conversation, and are obliged to depend on their memory, and that of a few friends who were with them, for what is here recorded.

The same day, he had been lying silent some time, when he said : " Mother, I shall want my father called to see his dear son die."

She said, " I hope, my son, you are not going to die. We hope God will spare you to us. How wretched we should be without our dear son."

J. " Well, when I come to die, you will call my dear father out of the study, won't you ?"

M. " Yes, my son, if we think you in that situation, your father will not leave you." He appeared satisfied.

It is not pretended to account for his abiding impression, that he would die. His parents and friends all expected him to recover, and no conversation is recollected that could have given him the impression ; but it is doubtful, whether he ever, for more than a few minutes, thought it likely he was to be well again, or that he desired it, except now and then when encouraged by others.

John's attachment to his father had ever been very strong from infancy, and was manifested on every occasion. Frequently, during a few months before his sickness, it seemed he could not find

words to express his affection. If his father was from home, he felt very lonely, and the moment he was seen returning, he would meet him, and express the greatest joy at seeing him. Whenever he sat down, John would come round him, and as soon as opportunity offered, climb into his lap, and putting his face up to his, repeat in the most affectionate tones: "Dear father! *My dear father!*" This affection appeared to the last in his constant desire to have his father with him, and his willingness to take from his hand whatever he was requested. If he appeared uneasy or impatient, his father's presence would almost always calm him, and if unwilling to take a medicine, a few words of reasoning from him removed all objections. The greatest unwillingness was overcome by his father telling him he must go out of the room and leave him, if he would not take the medicine, and even this was not necessary but once. When his father could hold him up, he always seemed most happy.

The afternoon of the day of the last mentioned conversation, he said: "Mother, I shall be a young preacher. I shall have two kinds of sermons, one to the righteous, and one to the wicked, and when my father is taken away, I shall preach them to this people. I shall tell them to love the Lord Jesus Christ, or they won't go to heaven." He was requested not to say any more, but his mind seemed all the time in vigorous action, and it was difficult to keep him within the bounds of prudence. That night he appeared so much better, that at his

request the family took tea in the room, where he was, and he sat at the table with them. The physician then could see nothing in the way of a speedy recovery.

The next day his disease took another unfavorable turn, but still the danger did not appear great. His parents did not, however, neglect to converse with him frequently respecting the necessity of being always prepared to meet God. It never moved him in the least, to tell him he might die, nor did he once manifest any unpleasant apprehensions at the thought, or the least unwillingness to meet death at any time. His father often proposed, when alone with him, to pray, asking him what he should pray for. Several times he replied : " Pray, that I may be holy," or, " Pray, that I may have a good heart." When asked if he prayed for it in his heart, he always replied : " Yes."

It is not recollected, that he ever was unwilling to hear the Bible read, or to unite in prayer, however much he was suffering at the time, although it sometimes required great effort to avoid groaning, or to keep still during prayer. Repeatedly, while sick, he requested his mother to read the Bible to him, and to have one of his parents pray with him, and was always desirous to have family prayer in his room. This attachment to the Bible and to prayer had been steadily increasing for years, and now it seemed his delight to draw near to God, in whose service he hoped to live eternally.

Would it not be well for young and old to keep in mind, while forming habits for life, and

perhaps for eternity, that those much attached to prayer, while in health, who have never neglected it in its proper seasons, have generally found their sweetest consolations in it on their sick and dying bed? How lovely such habits and attachments are in a sick child, no one can know but those who have watched such an one in his moments of pain and distress, and heard expressions of love to God, and resignation to his will flowing from his lips. The comfort the recollection affords to mourning relatives, is known by those who, like the parents of this lovely boy, have seen their fondest earthly hopes cut off in the death of a pious praying child. It sweetens sorrow, it removes the dread of death, it enables them to bless God for taking the loved one from the pains, and temptations, and sins and sorrows of this world, to the blessed rest of heaven.

Let affectionate children think of the feelings of their kind parents, should they be called to the grave early, and prepare to give them comfort in the hope of meeting them in heaven. Should this little book be the means of leading one soul to such a preparation, this beloved child's death will not have been vain.

Let parents too think of this, when forming the character of their children for life, for death, for the judgment, and for eternity.

The morning after the conversation abovementioned, while his mother was sitting by his bed, John began to speak: "Mother, I feel as if I could stand there."

M. "Where, my son?"

J. "There."

M. "Stand where, my son?"

J. "At the judgment seat of Christ."

M. It appears, that he had been thinking of it, and did not at first consider, that she did not understand as well as he, what he meant. She asked him: "Who will be your surety there?" The moment she used the word surety, she thought he would not understand its meaning, and was about to explain, but he replied: "God."

M. "In whose righteousness do you expect to be accepted?"

J. "Christ's."

M. "Do you expect to be justified in Christ's righteousness, or to stand there because you have been a good boy?"

J. "I expect to be justified in Christ's righteousness."

It should be here stated, that the words he used had been frequently explained to him, and he had heard them used and illustrated, till he seemed to fix a definite meaning to them. The evidences of a preparation to meet God were stated to him, and he as usual asked questions, but they are not particularly recollected.

Either in this conversation, or another about the same time, he was asked why we might hope to be justified in Christ's righteousness? He replied "Because he died to save sinners."

M. "Why do *you* hope for this?"

J. "Because I am a sinner."

He uniformly maintained, that he repented of

his sins, and believed in Christ, and his parents recollect not the least reason to doubt his entire habitual confidence in all the declarations of God's word. He always appeared to act on the conviction of their truth, as much as on the truth of what his father or mother said to him. Such unhesitating, unsuspecting confidence is rarely seen even in old Christians. He seems never to have learned to doubt them.

Within a few months of his death he had repeatedly called his mother to his bed after he retired at night, and requested her to tell him all she knew about the children in heaven, referring to the Saviour's words: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." While sick, he again desired her to tell him *all* she knew about them and particularly what they did in heaven. When she had finished, he said:

"I WISH TO JOIN THAT COMPANY OF CHILDREN AROUND GOD'S THRONE." His mother asked: "Are you willing to die, and leave your dear father and mother, to go and join them?"

He replied with perfect calmness: "Yes."

Other things were said, daily manifesting the same feelings, while he was every hour shewing the liveliest attachment for his parents, and seemed unwilling to have them out of his sight for any long time.

One day his father was sitting on the bed, holding him up, as he often requested, when he said: "My son, we hope you will get well, but it may be God's will, that you shall die. Are you willing?"

J. "Yes."

F. "Where will you be, my son, if you die?"

J. "*Where God pleases to put me.*"

F. "Are you willing he shall do with you as he may please?"

J. "Yes."

F. "Do you often pray to God in your heart?"

J. "Yes."

His father could at the time discover no reason to doubt, that he understood fully what he said, and felt as he expressed himself. Neither on mature reflection has he discovered the least evidence to the contrary, or any reason to doubt, that this was the habitual state of his mind during his sickness. It should be kept in view, that every one about him, all this time, expected him to recover, and so expressed themselves, when they spoke to him. Will not many an old Christian feel reproved by the submission of this babe in Christ? Should we doubt in the case of an adult, who uniformly used such language, and lived consistently with it, that he was prepared for a happy eternity? Would it not constitute the happiest reflections of pious mourners, that the thoughts of the father, or mother, or dear companion were in heaven, to which the soul looked with the utmost calmness, desiring to be with Christ, and the saints around God's throne? And what reason can be given, why even little children should not cause the same joy by such conversation? Why should not parents and children labor and pray, that they may talk with God like Samuel, and be

consecrated to him from infancy like Jeremiah, and know by experience his truth and love from a very little child, like Timothy? What can make them so lovely, so dutiful, so happy? What can so secure them against the temptations of life, or fit them so well for a sick and dying hour?

John had always, especially within a few months, been very attentive to his father's concerns, and seemed determined to know all he could learn about them, and to help him all in his power. It was for months a common saying in the family, when his father was absent, and they wished to know where he had gone, or what he had been doing, or when he would return: "Ask John, he knows all about it;" and it was rare, that he could not give the desired information. He had told much before his sickness, of helping his father in the garden, when the time should come, and when first taken sick, he requested him not to do all the planting, before he should get well to help him. But about the time of the last conversations mentioned, he appeared to lose all interest in this, and every earthly concern. He never after introduced conversation about them, and if others did so, he would not continue it, but seemed perfectly indifferent to it.

As many as three times, when his parents and the physician thought him getting better, the disease, without any assignable cause, suddenly put on a new and unexpected form, and became more violent. But as it seemed to yield to the operation of medicine, and his constitu-

tion had been good, and he complained but little, except when attacked anew, his parents expected his recovery till the last hour of his life. On this account they held fewer conversations with him towards the last, and kept no record of what he said, so as to preserve the order of time. He was feeble, and it caused him pain to talk much, and they hoped for better opportunities. Like many others, they put death at a distance, and neglected to do what they now wish had been done; but the opportunity is forever gone.

Several times, however, he commenced conversation himself, always about religion, or heaven, or something connected with them; and his father or mother checked him, lest he should injure himself. What is recollected will now be given, without any certainty as to the order of time.

At one time as he was sitting in a chair, and his father standing by him, he looked up with a most affecting expression, and laboring for breath, said: "Father I think God is carrying on a work." His father asked: "Where my son?" He replied: "In my heart." He seemed willing and desirous to converse, but as his lungs were then weak and inflamed, he was requested not to say more.

One day during the last week of his life, his mother being about to pray with him, asked him what she should pray for. He replied: "That I may be recovered to health."

M. "Should I not rather pray, that God's will may be done?"

J. "Yes."

M. "Are you willing I should pray, that God's will may be done, that he may take you away, if he pleases, or raise you up?"

J. "Pray, that God's will may be done."

Sometimes he was very nervous, and would ask those near him to go away, and leave him alone, but if prayer was proposed, he always desired it, and never did he shew any disrelish for this, or for hearing the scriptures. He often requested his parents to read the Bible to him, and they generally asked, where he would have them read. He generally referred it to them, but once requested to have the first chapter of Job read, and once where it says: "Son give me thy heart." During the reading he was always attentive, and if not too weak, or in great pain, had some questions to propose, as to the meaning of the part read, or the character of the persons named. The character of Job he admired, but it puzzled him much to discover why such a good man should be so much afflicted. That wicked people should be punished he admitted, but then why the good must suffer, was a mystery, as it is to many. When told however, that God did it to make them better, and prepare them for more happiness in heaven, he was satisfied.

One day, lying in bed, he groaned, and complained of pain. To divert his mind, his mother said to him: "Think, my son, there is a man at Mrs. ——'s who is much more afflicted than you are. He cannot help himself at all." His father was in the room, and he said: "Father you had better go and see him, and talk to

him closely." His mother asked him: "Closely about what, my son?" He replied: "You know." But his parents had no doubt what he meant, for he frequently spoke of talking closely to persons about religion, and now he wished to use no more words than necessary, as he spoke with pain.

Another time, when suffering much with a blister, and probably with internal pains, his mother remarked: "Though you suffer much, my dear son, God does not willingly afflict, or grieve the children of men." He asked: "Why don't he?" He was told of the love and goodness of God, and that our sins are the cause of our suffering—that he suffered, because his parents from Adam had sinned, and he had sinned against God, who is so kind and merciful. He seemed to have discovered consolation in this truth, and complained very little ever after.

His convictions of sin appear to have been, at times, very clear and in a degree distressing, as is probably the case with all Christians. Early in his sickness he said: "Mother, I cannot help sometimes bursting into tears."

M. "Bursting into tears! for what, my son?"

J. "The same that —— —— did that Sabbath." (Referring to a person he had seen to weep in meeting.)

M. "Well what did —— —— for?"

J. "You know."

M. "But I meant you to tell me what you think he did for."

J. "Because he had lived in rebellion against God so long."

How abiding this conviction was, no one can tell, but he often appeared grieved, and humbled, when his sins were mentioned, and frequently prayed for pardon, and a new and holy heart. It may not be improper here to mention, that his parents had never encouraged him to believe, that he had been born again, fearing, that it might have an ill tendency. They taught him the truths of the Bible, and gave him an account of lives of eminent Christians, and left him to form his own opinion of himself. Without her intention, he once got the idea, that his mother considered him a Christian, but it was not cherished by any encouragement. Yet he scarcely appeared for months, if for years, to entertain a doubt of his being a new-born person, always spoke as considering himself a Christian at heart, and acted on that supposition, shewing, that he considered pious people his companions and dearest friends.

The last Sabbath of his life, he appeared very ill in the morning, and his parents requested prayers in public: "That God would sanctify his soul, and either restore him to health, or take him to himself." At night he seemed better, and his mother told him "the people had been praying for him, and God had heard their prayers, and she hoped his life would be spared." He asked: "Why do you wish my life to be spared?" She replied: "Because we should be so unhappy without our only son." He expressed no desire to recover.

This week he was feeble, and sometimes nervous, and his parents discouraged his talking.

Sometimes he seemed in deep study, and then would commence talking on some topic of religion, and continue till told he must not talk any more. Not unfrequently he was stopped immediately, before finishing a sentence, but a few things are remembered. One day he said: "Mother, ——— and ——— make very foolish prayers."

M. "How foolish, my son?"

J. "Because they do. I told them if they did not pray better, God would not hear them. I told them they must pray better, or they would not go to heaven."

This week he twice, without any introduction, told his mother, he thought he could stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and when asked if it was because he had been a good boy, or because he loved Christ, he replied: "Because I love Christ."

Repeatedly, when requested to take medicine, and wishing to be excused, he was told he must take it, because the doctor was very kind to him, and wished him to get well. He asked: "What for does the doctor wish me to get well?"

One day this week, his father being alone with him, he said: "Father I want to talk with the doctor."

F. "About what, my son?"

J. "About Jesus Christ."

The doctor had by his constant attendance and kindness, won his affection, and he had heard, that he was not a professor of religion. This was no doubt the occasion of his wish.

But he never had an opportunity to do what he really desired.

The day previous to that of his death he seemed relieved, and shewed no symptoms of specific disease, except a cough, and a leaning to the left side. His parents and the physician, thought him better, although feeble. Each of his parents, when alone with him, prayed with him repeatedly. When his father asked what he should pray for, John replied: "Pray that I may be holy, and fit for heaven." When asked if he often prayed for it in his heart, he said "Yes."

Once when asked by his mother, what she should pray for, he replied: "That this sickness may not be unto death."

M. "Shall I pray for that, or that the will of God may be done?"

J. "That the will may be done."

This elliptical mode of speech he often used, especially when it hurt him to speak. His language was always concise, and perspicuous, but more so when sick, than ever.

This day he was told his father had bought some figs, and it was hoped they would strengthen him, so that he would get about. He asked: "Why do you wish me to get well?" Seeming to wonder, that his parents could desire it, when he desired rather to depart and be with Christ.

That evening he was very much distressed, but could specify no particular part where he suffered. When asked where he felt bad, he said: "All over." He frequently desired to have his pillow placed on different parts of the bed, but after a while said, there was no com-

fortable place in his bed. He could be still but for a moment, yet when his father proposed to pray with him, he at once became calm, and so continued till the close of prayer.

The next morning he seemed better, and the physician had hope of a speedy recovery, left him some bark, and directed more nourishing food, than had been given him. He was at first loath to take the bark, but his mother told him his father was making a strawberry bed in the garden, and he might pick some for her, when they should grow. He took the bark, but said nothing.

He was placed in a chair, at the window, to see a man at work in the garden, but appeared to have lost all interest in it. When spoken to about it, he made no reply, but looked at his mother in such a way, that she thought: 'He has done with this world; why should I trouble him.' During the day he gained strength, and ate with a little more appetite, but said very little. It seemed to give him pain to talk.

In the afternoon his mother was holding him up on the couch provided for him near the fire, when she said to him: "My son, we hope God will bless the means for your recovery, but you may die. Are you willing to die and leave your dear father and mother?"

He replied: "Yes."

M. "What makes you willing?"

J. "I cannot tell you," meaning probably, that it hurt him to talk, as he had previously said.

M. "I wish you to tell me in your own words."

J. "I cannot."

M. "Is it because you think you have been a good boy, or because you love Christ?"

J. "Because I love Christ."

At his request his mother read to him from the Bible, and related the history of Joseph, which he always admired.

As he sat on the couch, and could not converse, his father gave him two dollars to amuse him. His mother seeing him playing with them, asked him how many Bibles they would buy for those poor children who had none. He answered: "I do not know." Sometime after he asked how many they would buy. Towards evening he shewed them to his father, and said: "Father, may I *own* these?" distinguishing between *have* and *own*. Probably he thought of the Bibles, as he had often wept when told of the poor heathen children who have no one to tell them of the Saviour, and spoke frequently of sending them the Bible, and repeatedly said: "When I am a man like my father, I will go and preach Jesus Christ to them. He had a Bible sent to him by Mr. R——, of Philadelphia, which he valued highly, both because it was sent to him by a good man, and because it contained the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the evening he seemed stronger than for some days, and set up in a chair more than an hour. About eight o'clock his father came from the study, found him sitting, but looking distressed, and soon removed him to the couch,

and held his head. Before being removed he seemed distressed for breath, and frequently coughed without raising, seeming very weak at the lungs.

His father asked him: "Can't you, my son, cough so as to raise?" He shook his head, meaning no.

Soon he said: "O dear! I wish I could cough so as to *raise*." Then in a few minutes: "O dear! I am a *poor* boy. An't I a poor boy, father?"

His distress increased fast, and soon after being laid on the couch, he complained of being cold, and was wrapt in a warm covering. He wished to be removed, and when put on the couch again his father felt a cold sweat on his face, and observed: "Now we must be sure an abscess is forming;" this having been mentioned as the greatest danger, and cold sweat the common signs of it. Soon he asked again to be removed, and seemed in more distress. His mother removed him, he immediately sank down, as if he had fainted. She cried: "O husband! he is going." His father ran round the couch, and laid him on it, and held his head on his own bosom, wiping the cold sweat from his face and bathing his head in camphor. He seemed to revive a little, and asked to be again removed, but was told to remain a minute. His parents perceived he was dying, and committed his soul to his faithful covenant God, to whom they had early dedicated him for life, death and eternity. His father asked him, if he knew his father and mother. He looked at

each earnestly, and affectionately, but said nothing. Soon he gasped twice, then breathed a few times with difficulty, and his soul was gone. For a minute it was thought *possible*, that he had fainted, and efforts were made to resuscitate him, but in vain; his soul had been received by angels, and gone to join the company of little children around God's throne. There he had wished to go; that he might be prepared for it, he had prayed thousands of times, and desired others to pray; there all his inquiries will be answered by infinite wisdom, and his thirst for knowledge, and his ardent desires for sanctification will be completely satisfied. His trials are over, his sorrows ended; the perils of the journey are all surmounted, and he has reached his eternal home, and found ease from pain, rest from toil, and all the powers of his active, vigorous mind are now employed in looking into God's works, and the ways of truth, and serving him whom angels worship and saints delight to praise.

In a few minutes his features were all composed, as when asleep, with that mildness, and calm dignity for which he was ever admired by all who knew him.

His parents had not allowed him to be called beautiful, lest it should corrupt his mind, and make him vain; but as he lay before them lifeless, few that saw him, but would exclaim: How beautiful! How lovely even in death!

It was Friday, April 8th, 1831, about nine o'clock at night, when the soul was freed from its clayey tenement. The tempest was raging

without, and thick darkness covered the land, but all was peace within, fit emblem of the agitations of the expiring body, and the peace of the soul resting on the bosom of a Saviour.

Thus he lived his day, and thus he died, aged four years, eleven months, and four days.

The Sabbath came, and the numerous school assembled in the house of God; the body was carried there, and lay near the place where he had delighted his teacher and his companions with promptness in his lesson, and his affection, and docility, while receiving instruction. The Rev. Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, who had been lately called to a bereavement similar to that of the mourning parents, addressed the audience in a sermon not designed as a funeral discourse, not to speak of the dead, but to call the living to a preparation for eternity. It is believed his words were not lost, as seed sown by the way-side.

From the house of God, the people repaired to the repository of the dead. There were seen no costly array of mourning apparel, and no useless funeral pomp. Six boys, three of whom had been John's class-mates in the Sabbath School, carried his body to the grave, and his parents and friends, and all the school, followed, and there was real sorrow; for many knew him, and all who knew, loved him.

When they arrived at the grave, and the body had taken possession of its resting place, the bereaved father addressed the numerous assembly, saying: "My friends, when I came among you a few months ago, little did I think it was to lay my beloved son so soon in this earth, with your

ancestors and friends. But the Lord knoweth best what should be, and to him I submit. He is my witness, that I have not shrunk from even this, could I see your salvation. Yes, my friends, he is my witness, that when I have been praying for the outpouring of his Spirit on you, the question has seemed to come to me plainly almost as in words, 'Are you willing, as a condition of your prayer being answered, to give up all? Are you willing, if I please, to be laid aside from your labors? Can you consent to part with even that beloved boy?' And I have answered, 'Yes, Lord; send thy Spirit, and take what thou wilt.' He has taken me at my word; he has poured out his Spirit, and taken my son; and if it can be the means of your salvation, I *joyfully* submit. O, prepare, young and old, to follow him, and join with me, and say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'"*

Many were the tears shed around the grave, and as the people retired, it is believed many went to pray, that God might prepare them to go in peace, as this child had gone.

Over his grave has been erected a plain marble slab, with this inscription:—

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* The speaker on this affecting occasion, the father who thus committed the remains of a beloved son to the dust, was himself called to resign his spirit to God on the 26th of October following, and his body now reposes by the side of his sleeping babe in "the narrow house." May that blessing which he so ardently sought at the sacrifice of his dearest comforts, and which beyond doubt was his strongest desire in death, be abundantly conferred on his bereaved flock, and on their children and their children's children.

In Memory of
JOHN M.
Son of Rev. Asa and Mrs. Jane G. Mead,
Born at Brunswick,
In the state of Maine, May 4th, 1826,
Died in the hope of a blessed immortality, April 8th,
1831.
LUKE XVIII. 16, 17.

The following poetry, composed by a lady of East Hartford, will speak to the heart of each bereaved parent, while it shows the feelings cherished by all who knew this child. It was addressed to his mother, a few days after the funeral.

TO MRS. MEAD.

He was a lovely boy;
Health spread its halo round him, and the smile
Of animated joy was blended with
A look of high and holy intellect,
That struck the observer, as he passed along;
And he would turn his head, and sigh, and say,
"'T would not be long of earth."

And so it proved—
Fond mother, so it proved.—Oh! hast thou not,
In all thy heart's full rapture, oft times looked
As thou would'st pierce the veil that hid from thee
The future, and imag'd forth what he might
Chance to be—a herald of the cross—a
Strong man armed—imbued with wisdom from
On high—mighty in word and deed?—Oh! has
He thus appeared to thy fond vision?—And
Then would come the pang of separation,
Even as if real,—then, too, would come
The pledge and promise, held to those, whose strong,
Unwavering faith, would give up all—even
All for Christ.—And thou wast far above the

World,—perchance a different scene might be at
Times brought up to view. But let a veil rest
On it,—'t is a Mother's privilege to draw
The *picture* as she lists, and from the warm
Affections of the heart, the pencil takes
Its coloring; and oh, how bright and vivid
Are its *hues*.

The hand of God was on him,
And he fell—even in the spring-time of his
Life, with all his blossoms gathered round him.
The promised fruit, where is it?—Maturing
In the sky, amid the warmth and light of
Uncreated love. And shall we weep?—'T is
Nature's hallowed boon, in mercy given,
To soothe the stricken soul. Tears then may flow,
And thou wilt find them coursing down thy cheek,
When, in thy lonely hours, no eye but that
Of God is on thee. When summer twilight
Clothes the heavens in beauty, and when the
Uplifted stars seem praising their Creator, thou
Wilt think on thy beloved: for then it was
Thy wonted time to bend his knee beside
Thine own—to take his little hands in thine,
And raise them upward, while the prayer of faith
Broke from thy fervent lips:—"Lord, make him thine."
He will be still before thee—his playful
Movements round the hearth will meet thee there—and
His all questioning tones will steal upon thine
Ear, amid the voices of the world, with
A subdued and holy sweetness, that will
Sink into thine heart. Yes, and the last—last
Look. Oh! this requires *o'er-mastering* faith to
Tear it from the grasp of cherished, recollected love.

C. S.

And is not his lot a blessed one? He was, from the first, the subject of many prayers, for the blessing of God upon him. He was the constant care of parents who had no greater delight, connected with this world, than to make him happy. His naturally lovely disposition was

cherished to the utmost, so that he was ever a most happy child. His mind was early cultivated with care, and fed with knowledge, and divine truth, and kept constantly in happy exercise. He was the object of approbation and love to all who knew him, and enjoyed uniformly good health, and lively, cheerful spirits. But above all, he early had the spirit of piety found in him, and after a short probation, has been called from all his troubles and sorrows to mansions of everlasting bliss, to serve the God whom he loved and adored, forever and ever. True, he has left his beloved parents, and numerous friends, and brilliant earthly prospects, when, to his young mind, all appeared fair before him. But his parents mourn not as those without hope. Their beloved child is only gone a little before them, and all that he loved of God's people, will soon be with him, never to part. The best of earthly prospects, what are they? Soon clouded, and the fairest form withers, and the firmest health decays, and the most flattering views deceive; but now he is beyond all disappointment, and fears no change. God is his teacher and father, angels and spirits of the blessed his companions, and heaven his home. What better could he ask? What more could his loving parents and friends desire for him? What more could God bestow?

Such are the views now of his most affectionate friends—even of the father and mother who gave him life, and loved him, even perhaps too much. They would not call him back, but hope and prepare to meet him in heaven, in God's

own time. Thus death assumes a most cheerful aspect, disarmed of all its terrors.

It may be permitted to introduce the following Sabbath School Hymn, composed on the occasion of his death, by the same lady who wrote the poetry following the epitaph, who had felt a lively interest in John, while alive, and mourned him when dead.

SABBATH SCHOOL HYMN.

Loved one, where is now thy rest,
Sweetly on thy Saviour's breast?
Dost thou now thy bliss begin,
Freed from sorrow and from sin?

We are toiling here below,
Where the troubled waters flow;
Thou hast reached the blissful shore
And will toil and weep no more.

If thy gentle spirit may
For thy young companions pray,
Teach us from the realms above,
How to prize a Saviour's love.

We are destined thee to meet
At our blessed Saviour's feet;
Or to dwell in endless wo,
Where the wicked surely go.

Thou, indeed, hast gone before;
Oh, that we may sin no more;
Then, when time with us is past,
We shall find thy heaven at last.

Loved one, oh, where is thy rest,
Sweetly on thy Saviour's breast?
Thou hast now thy bliss begun,
And a crown of glory won.

Reader, are you a child? See, from this example, that you are not too young to seek, and find a Saviour. You are not younger than John, not too young to believe in Christ, and repent of your sins, and love God, and pray to him often in your heart, when alone, and when with others. At two years old, his father and mother hoped John loved God. You are older than he, perhaps older than he was when he died. He felt he was a sinner, and lamented it; and are not you a sinner? He repented, and prayed for pardon; and can not you, even though a little child? You are not too young to die. Your prospects are no better than were his, your health no better, your parents' desires for your life no greater than were the desires of his. Will you not, then, prepare to live to God, and to die, when he may please, and to join the company of children around God's throne? If you will, repent *now*, pray now to be forgiven, for Jesus' sake, believe on him, and love God now; and while you live, he will keep you, and when you die, he will save you, and take you home to heaven.

Parents, who may read this, Are you doing your duty to your children? They are probably not too young to sin, not too young to learn to serve God, not too young to die. Your example may very early decide them for eternal life or death. O, think them not too young to come to Jesus, nor too young to learn the way to heaven. Fill their young minds with heavenly truth, and show yourselves its happy influence in your treatment of them, and your daily conduct before them. You may, like the parents of John, be

called early to lay them in the grave, but how sweet will be the anticipation of meeting them in heaven, if you have led them to Jesus. In your prayers for them, and your instructions, are you laboring for their immediate conversion, or are you thinking not of this, but laboring, that it may take place some years hence? Is not God as able to convert them immediately, as he was this child?—as able to do it at the very first dawning of truth on their mind, as when they have sinned for years, and hardened their hearts against the truth? Imitate the Syrophenician woman, in your perseverance in prayer, and faith and effort; and Christ will say to you, "Be it unto thee even as thou wouldst."

You may not have your dear little ones many years, but you will have them long enough to do your duty to them. Do it now, do it daily, do it in faith and prayer, and patient, persevering effort, and you will secure an eternal blessing.

Let not Sabbath School teachers despond, nor relax their efforts. Let them labor for the conversion of their pupils now, and believe God able and willing to grant the blessing immediately, and pray for it in faith. Let them cherish every favorable disposition in the dear children of their care, but count nothing accomplished, till the soul is converted, and they see from Sabbath to Sabbath, each child growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE END.

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